

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 2 are amended, and claims 9, 10 and 11 are added. No new matter is added by this amendment. Reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner Rivell at the interview held December 3, 2007 are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,345,649 to Dischler. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 calls for a single valve comprising a seat with an opening and a semi-rigid membrane with one or several openings, wherein the membrane in a first stable position closes the opening in the seat. Because Dischler fails to disclose a valve wherein the membrane closes an opening in the seat, Dischler fails to anticipate claim 1.

The Office Action, on page 2, states that Dischler's Figs. 2 and 3 disclose a seat and a semi-rigid membrane with one or several openings. However, as discussed during the personal interview, in Dischler's Fig. 3, the plug 62 (alleged seat) plugs the tapered port 48 (alleged opening) in the bi-stable element 42 (alleged membrane) (col. 3, lines 48-55). This is the opposite of claim 1, wherein the membrane in a first stable position closes the opening in the seat. Because the membrane closes the opening in the seat, various advantages can be achieved, such as simplification of the manufacturing and operation of the valve. Therefore, Dischler's more complex design, where the seat plugs an opening in the membrane, does not teach on all of the features of claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Dischler in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,855,221 to Rieckhoff, and rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Dischler in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,084,707 to Frye. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

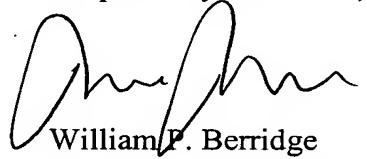
Neither of the remaining applied references overcomes the deficiencies of Dischler in disclosing a valve, wherein a membrane in a first stable position closes the opening in the seat.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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WPB:RHR/axl

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